

Andrew Jackson to Tennessee Volunteer Brigade Platoon Officers, December 8, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO PLATOON OFFICERS OF VOLUNTEERS.

Fort Strother December 8, 1813

Gentlemen: I have this moment recd. yours, of this morning and for answer thereto, refer you to my answer made to the address of Colo. Martin of the 2nd. Regt. Tennessee volunteers on the same subject on the 6th. instant, Barely here remarking on some misconceptions, that appears to have been taken up and expressed in yours of this date now before me. It is true I shall never forget the order for our dismissal from Publick service by the secratary of war recd at Camp Jackson Natchey with its inhumane and barbarous consequences. I say dismissal, and every officer and soldier belonging to the volunteers, will well remember, it was a *dismissal* of the most extraordinary kind, and not a discharge. your general hesitat[e]d not on the step his duty to his brave compatriots in arms bound him to take—his order of the 16th. of march will fully prove. contrary to the advice of many on his own responsibility he marched them to their country and their friends, when he reached columbia, the 2nd. Regt. wishing there to be dismissed your General ever mindfull of their interest gave them a dismissal from the then Tour of duty containing a certificate, as contemplated in the 7th. section of the act under which they were raised, in case they should not be called into service again untill the expiration of the time expressed in the law under which they were engaged, obtaining a sacred pledge from all, that they would on a call of their country, obay that call with alacrity. was there an officer or soldier that vewed that certificate as a final discharge from their obligation under

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the acts of Congress of February 6th. 1812 and July 6th. 1812? was there one officer or soldier that even believed me invested with the power of discharging the volunteers from their obligation of enrollment under the acts? I gave the answer, there could not be one; and I am happy to find in your letter of this day now before me, an acknowledgement that no power exist short of the congress of the united states, or the President of the U. S. where he is particularly authorised by law. Suppose then I had mistaken my power and given you a full discharge from your engagements under the law, would it had any binding force, would it exonerated you from your engagements. you afford the answer that it would not, and let me ask had I have been so imprudent; is there a generous breast amongst the volunteers, that would at this day, endeavour to take advantage of an act of Justice and friendship, intended for their benefit and make it redound to the injury of their General where no advantage could be obtained to themselves. I leave the answer to them. Let me ask is there a single volunteer that can say that I ever hazarded an opinion that there time of service would cease on the 10th instant there is not. They have heard me say, that if there time did expire on the 10th. they were entitled to pay for the whole time, and my best exertions should be made to obtain them this Justice. I have laboured hard for this object it would be the proudest moment of my life to have it in my power from any competent authority to announce it. from the indisposition of Mr Cunningham and my own with the press of other business I have to refer you to my letter of the 6th. to Colo. Martin of the 2nd Regt. T. V. to shew you what endeavours I have made and am still making to obtain for the volunteers an honourable dismissal from service. But when it is acknowledged that I am not invested with any legal power to discharge, when it is not contended that upon the clear principles of your engagement your time has expired, why will I be asked to give an honourable discharge. when it is admitted I have not the power—that, that power alone is with congress or the President of the united states. I have only to add that my continued exertions shall be used to get the whole volunteers honourable out of the field and that at the shortest Possible day, untill which period my confidence is they will remain steady at their post.

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I am gentlemen with the highest respect yr mo., ob, servt,